

**Statement by Mayor Bob Young  
on the Modern Pit Facility  
North Augusta, SC  
October 29, 2002**

Good evening.

Thank you for holding this important meeting in North Augusta tonight.

I am Mayor Bob Young, mayor of the consolidated government of Augusta – Richmond County. I represent nearly 200,000 of the finest and most hardworking people you will find anywhere in this great nation.

We are proud Americans, who have contributed our support to this country's nuclear weapons program for over fifty years. We stand ready today to renew that pledge.

Savannah River Site is important to our nation's defense. It is a critical piece in the puzzle that built the nuclear deterrence that ended the cold war.

The changing face of our world has changed the nature of the work that is required at Savannah River Site. We recognize that. Even today, the New York Times noted how the changing conditions at the plant have impacted the local community.

We understand that to our Federal government decisions concerning Savannah River Site must be based on national security and national need. We understand that boosting the economy of Augusta and surrounding cities and counties is not the reason S-R-S is here.

We have a most talented work force at Savannah River Site, both on the Westinghouse side and the Department of Energy side. Some of the brightest minds in the country are engaged in projects at the plant.

We want to see that talent stay in our community.

To that end, local governments have been exceedingly active in supporting new missions for the site, as well as supporting aggressive funding for environmental restoration.

Over the past four years, as mayor of Augusta, I have been personally involved in delivering the message of community support at meetings just like this one, both here in North Augusta and elsewhere. I have personally lobbied two Secretaries of Energy on the community issues related to Savannah River Site.

I want you to understand that we are not a community of spectators. We are actively engaged in helping the government build a sustainable work site with a variety of timely missions at Savannah River.

Earlier this year, the National Nuclear Security Administration said it would begin conceptual design work on the Modern Pit Facility.

You know why NNSA is moving forward with this issue, so I need not go into the background.

Let me tell you straight up that Savannah River Site is the best location for that project.

We have the highly trained staff to operate and maintain the sophisticated manufacturing systems. Plus, our network of universities and technical colleges is already positioned to produce the expanding workforce.

S-R-S has a fifty-year record of processing plutonium – safely. The plant also has the necessary training facilities and rapid emergency response capabilities.

Our workers have demonstrated over and over again their ability to construct, manage, and operate projects for the Department of Energy, and its predecessor agencies.

To use a cliché, the best people for the job are already on the job.

What is the impact to the community of this project? About 21-hundred jobs in the private sector. Construction will need about 1,000 workers – and our Council of Trades is extremely anxious to get their members to work. Operations and support will require at least 11-hundred jobs for the 50-year life of the plant.

The economic value for dollars spent in this community will be in the billions.

The Modern Pit Facility will help our community rebound from the shock waves of the continued downsizing of our largest employer in Aiken and Barnwell Counties.

But, as I mentioned earlier, the decision by our government will be based on national security and not Augusta's economic security.

I will submit, however, that in this case, both are tied together and linked in such a way that both of us come out a winner with a decision to site this plant at Savannah River Site.

Our city commission next week will adopt a resolution in support of the SRS option, further demonstrating community support for this project.

I will forward a copy to the Secretary for inclusion in this record.